AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please delete the section heading at page 1, line 1.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 21 that continues onto page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- In a common method of sticking a protective tape to a wafer, a protective tape sized larger than the wafer outer diameter is stuck, then a cutter 102, shown in Fig. 14, is inserted into the protective tape T at a position along the outer peripheral edge of the wafer W, and the protective tape T is cut out by swiveling the cutter 102 or a mounting table of the wafer W~~, as illustrated in Fig. 14~~ (see for example JP-A-H10-330022). --

Please replace the section heading at page 4, line 9, with the following rewritten section heading:

-- ~~DISCLOSURE~~SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 22 that continues onto page 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- In the method, the tape is cut beforehand to shape for sticking to the adherend and is thereafter attached to and held on the support film. Accordingly, the tape can be opposed to and stuck to the adherend while the tension to the tape is diffused to the support film. Moreover, the tape can be approximated to the adherend and be stuck thereto at a small angle, so that the tension required for the sticking can be reduced. Accordingly, the tape stuck to the adherend has less residual stress and ~~the~~warpage of the adherend can be prevented ~~from warpage~~. --

Please replace all of the paragraphs beginning on page 14, line 7 in the section entitled "BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS" continuing onto page 15, ending at line 15 with the following rewritten paragraphs:

-- ~~Fig. 1 is~~ Figs. 1(a) – (c) are a set of front views ~~explaining~~depicting the sticking operations by a method of the present invention;

~~Fig. 2 is~~Figs. 2(a) and (b) are a set of front views illustrating the sticking operation involving a frame member by a method of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a top plan view of Fig. 2;

~~Fig. 4 is~~Figs. 4(a) and (b) are a set of front views illustrating arrangements of a frame member and a mounting table of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a top plan view illustrating a configuration of the frame member of the invention;

Fig. 6 is a top plan view illustrating a configuration of the frame member of the invention;

~~Fig. 7 is~~Figs. 7(a) – (e) are a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of an apparatus according to the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a top plan view of the apparatus of the embodiment shown in Fig. 7;

~~Fig. 9 is~~Figs. 9(a) and (b) are a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of how a protective tape is stuck and a release film is released in the embodiment of Fig. 7;

~~Fig. 10 is~~Figs. 10(a) – (e) are a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of an apparatus according to the present invention;

Fig. 11 is a top plan view of the apparatus of the embodiment shown in Fig. 10;

~~Fig. 12 is~~Figs. 12(a) – (c) are a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of an apparatus according to the present invention;

~~Fig. 13 is~~Figs. 13(a) and (b) are a set of perspective views illustrating how a tape to be stuck to an adherend is laminated with a support film according to the present invention;

Fig. 14 is a perspective view illustrating how the protective tape stuck to a wafer is cut to the shape of the wafer according to the prior art; and

Fig. 15 is a front view showing a conventional way for sticking a protective tape previously cut to wafer shape to a wafer. --

Please replace the section heading at page 15, line 17, with the following rewritten section heading:

-- ~~PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS~~DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION --

Please replace the paragraph at page 16, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Because the tape 12 can be held in a planar state without excess ~~tensions~~tension while the support film 10 is tensioned as mentioned above, the tape 12 can be stuck to the adherend 14 with reduced residual stress. Therefore, the adherend 14 to which the tape 12 has been stuck can be effectively prevented from warpage. --

Please replace the paragraph at page 17, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The tape 12 is formed to size corresponding to that of the adherend 14 by previously punching a long tape to desired shape. For example, when the protective tape 12 is stuck to the adherend 14 ~~being~~ in the form of a wafer, the protective tape 12 punched approximately to shape of the round wafer adherend 14 is prepared and is attached to the support film 10. It will be appreciated that the tape 12 may have a size somewhat larger or smaller than that of the adherend 14. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 13 that continues onto page 19, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- As described above, the present invention reduces the residual stress of the tape 10 stuck to the adherend 14 and thereby prevents the warpage of the adherend 14 by sticking the tape 12 to the adherend 14 with the tape 12 being attached to the long support film 10. Furthermore, Figs. 2 and 3 illustrate another embodiment of the present invention. As illustrated, a frame member 18 is arranged in a position along the outer circumference of the adherend 14, and the support film 10 is attached to the frame member 18 so that the tape 10 to be stuck to the adherend 14 will be included by the frame member 18 (Fig. 2(a)). The support film 10 in the frame is then pressed to stick the tape 12 to the adherend 14 (Fig. 2 (b)). By attaching and fixing the support film 10 to the frame member 18 as above, the support film 10 ~~in~~ within the frame of the frame member 18 is blocked from the tension ~~to~~present in the support film 10 ~~out~~residing outside of the frame. --

Please replace the 4 paragraphs beginning at page 20, line 13, that continue onto page 21, and end on line 15, with the following rewritten paragraphs:

-- The shape of the frame member 18 is not particularly limited and may be square as illustrated in Fig. 3. In the illustrated case, when the support film 10 is pressed with the press roll 50, the principal contact surface of the press roll 50 should be smaller than the

width of the frame member 18 and the width of the support film 10 may be smaller than the width of the frame member 18, as shown in Fig. 5.

~~For~~In the situation where the adherend 14 ~~being~~is circular as a wafer, the frame member 18 may be a circular shape having a size slightly larger than that of the adherend, as illustrated in Fig. 6. In this case, the principal contact surface of the press roll 50 defines a circular protrudent portion 54 having a diameter larger than that of the wafer; the press roll 50 is rotated over the frame member 18 to cause the protrudent portion 54 to press the support film 10.

Hereinbelow, the sticking apparatuses according to the invention will be described with reference to an embodiment in which the protective tape is stuck to the adherend ~~being~~ in the form of a wafer.

The sticking apparatus of an embodiment shown in Fig. 7 includes a frame member 18 and a mounting table 16 as described above, and further includes a fixing roll 22 for attaching and fixing a support film 10 to the frame member 18, ~~an~~a sticking roll 24 for sticking a protective tape 12 to a wafer 14, and a wind-up roll 26 for the support film 10. In ~~the figure~~Fig. 7, ~~20 denotes~~ a feed out roll 20 ~~that~~ feeds out the support film 10~~, and 21 denotes~~with the aid of pinch rolls 21. --

Please replace the paragraph at page 22, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The first operation involves ~~feed~~ feeding of the support film 10 from the feed out roll 20 and winding thereof on the wind-up roll 26. This transfers the protective tape 12 stuck to the support film 10 to a position between the wind-up roll 26 and the fixing roll 22 (Fig. 7(a)). --

Please replace the paragraph at page 25, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Thereafter, the frame member 18 and the mounting table 16 are aligned by relative movements as necessary; for example, the protective tape 12 and the wafer 14 are approximated and opposed to each other with a clearance of about 1 to 3 mm. Subsequently, the sticking or application roll 34 is moved on the upper surface of the frame member 18 and is rotated over the framed support film 10 to press the same and to stick the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14 (Fig. 10(c)). --